

#### **Annex 4: Issues for discussions during the meetings organised in the context of the Horizon 2020 Policy Support Facility (PSF) specific support to Georgia.**

An international Expert Panel has been convened by the European Commission in October 2017 on request of the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia. The panel has been asked to provide tailored advice and concrete recommendations to the Georgian authorities linked to the implementation of the following three focus areas for Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) policies:

- 1) **Support in identification of promising research fields**
- 2) **Measures for narrowing the gap between research and industry/business**
- 3) **Proposal for the performance-based funding of research entities**

In a first in-country mission to Tbilisi from 4-7 December 2017, the panel wants to:

- get a **better understanding of the current situation** in the three focus areas
- make **contacts to key stakeholders** in the country, and **gather their views** on how to tackle the focus areas,
- **collect information on possible solutions, options and their feasibility,**
- identify **visions for change** and the limitations for implementing them.

We provide in the following few starting points for discussion with key stakeholders per each focus area. We want to underline that we do not provide here a complete list of questions, but few overarching areas for discussion; we would not like to limit the dynamics of discussion during the meetings with Georgian colleagues.

For focus area 1 **identification of promising research fields** the panel has learned that currently a broad range of research priorities has been specified, and a focussing on a limited number of promising research fields is required. The panel would like to understand among other issues:

- *What is your view on the current process for identifying prioritized research fields?*
- *Which methods for identifying promising research fields are applied and known in the country, e.g. is the concept of smart specialisation considered for this task?*
- *For which purpose should research fields be identified, basic and/or applied research? Distribution of funding?*
- *What do you believe are the top three priority research fields and why?*
- *Which possible solutions do you see that are relevant for Georgia?*
- *Who are the key stakeholders that should be involved in identification of the priorities?*

For focus area 2 **measures for narrowing the gap between research and industry/business** the panel has learned that first measures have been taken, e.g. with the creation of the

Georgian Innovation and Technology Agency (GITA) in 2014 and a certain portfolio of support measures is available. However, the challenge remains on how to better link research and business. The panel would like to understand among other issues:

- *What are the key challenges for research-business cooperation, what needs to be done to bridge this gap e.g. in education, at university/institute level, from the business side?*
- *How would you assess the support measures for research-business cooperation that are currently available in the country, e.g. GITA schemes, the work of Technology Transfer offices?*
- *Is there a need for more /less state support? How far is an innovation culture available, etc? Which measures could realistically be implemented over the next years, e.g. tax incentives, support structures, incentives for students (e.g. innovation competitions), entrepreneurship education, preferential loans, cooperative projects (industry/university consortia)*
- *How far is individual (non-institutional) cooperation between university researchers and businesses (like consultancy) taking place?*
- *Are there any success stories in University-Business cooperation/projects in the country, or failures to learn from? What are the factors of the success/failure?*
- *Which possible solutions do you see that are feasible for Georgia?*

For focus area 3 **performance-based funding of research entities** the panel has learned that a study was undertaken in 2014 on research performance assessment (Bregvadze et al) and first measures discussed. The Academy of Sciences has a key role in research assessment. The panel would like to understand among other issues:

- *How is research performance of universities and research institutes currently assessed? What role has the Academy of Sciences here now and how has it assessed research performance in recent years? Which effects had the Bregvadze report and how far have recommendations been taken up and implemented?*
- *Which methods are applied for assessing research performance, e.g. annual reporting, peer review, self assessment, etc.*
- *Which data and what kind of indicators are currently collected, e.g. publication output, patenting, international cooperation, research-business cooperation, etc.*
- *How can KPI collection schemes be administered on institutional and national level?*
- *How should research performance be linked to research funding? Which possible solutions do you see that are feasible in the country?*

After the mission, the panel will discuss the outcomes and draft a first tentative outline on the status quo in the focus areas, and possible options on how to improve the situation. In a

second in-country mission in February 2018, the panel would like to gather additional views of stakeholders that could not be met in the first mission because of time constraints, and discuss and verify possible options with the key stakeholders.